1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

361 the heaps of refuse many feet deep, chiefly consisting of the shells of molluscs and the bones of animals. Such kitchen-middens, as they have been called, are to be found in numbers all around the coasts of the islands.

In the case of the coast-dwelling communities the camping sites are always close to the sea-shore or to a creek, so that they can be reached by canoe. In the case of those dwelling [312] inland this is of course not so. In any case one of the chief factors determining the choice of the site is the existence of a supply of fresh water. This is of extreme importance in the case of a site to be occupied during the dry season when fresh water becomes scarce.

221 361 Within their own territory the local group is what we may speak of as semi-nomadic. The coast-dwellers rarely reside continuously at the same spot for more than a few months, but [268] shift from one camp to another, moved by different causes. If a death occurs the camp is deserted for several months and a new one is occupied. A change of camp often takes place at a change of season, some spots presenting particular advantages, such as shelter from the prevailing wind, or better hunting or fishing, at certain times of the year. Another cause of the [364] abandonment of a camp by the coast-dwellers is that all refuse is thrown away close to the camp, and after a few months the decaying animal matter thus accumulated renders the spot uninhabitable. The natives seem to find it easier to move their camp than to clear away their refuse. The truth is, perhaps, that they are so accustomed to change their camp from one spot to another, in order to make the best use of the natural resources available, that there is no necessity for them to take those sanitary measures that would be essential if they wished to remain for many months continuously at the same place.

The forest-dwellers are less nomadic in their habits than the coast-dwellers. One of the reasons for this is that as they cannot convey their belongings from one place to another by canoe, but must carry them overland, the moving of a camp is a more tiresome business with them than it is with the coast-dwellers. During a great part of the year the forest-dwellers

Mr Subramanian of the Forest Department and Mr Majid's young son also accompanied us. We reached Bumila Creek on the north eastern coast of the Little Andaman at about 3 P.M. and having sighted an Andamanese hut we decided to anchor the launch there. The beach was about 2 miles from the place of anchorage. We took out a small boat and rowed to the beach and reached the hut at about 4 P.M. It was found to be abandoned but there were signs of human occupation and within a few yards a water-hole was discovered. A broken canoe, with a single out-rigger was found close to the hut (*see* Plate I, Fig. 1). Burnt coal and smouldering ashes in the centre of the hut showed that it was probably deserted by the Aborigines as soon as they had sighted us. After making a careful inspection of the place we returned to our launch and decided to anchor there for the night. Unfortunately the choppy sea and the strong current coming from the Bumila Creek tossed our small boat throughout the whole night, as a result of which all of us had an uncomfortable time.

We left southwards towards Hut Bay early in the morning and as we moved along the coast we sighted another Onge hut. This did not seem to be deserted as we saw a few people moving about. We decided to stop there and investigate. We took out a boat and moved towards the coast with such presents as we had brought from Port Blair on the advice of the Chief Commissioner. When we got near the coast, we left the boat and walked for about a furlong through coral beds finally reaching the shore. The hut was found to be circular in shape and not too large, and was occupied by 2 adult females, 1 adult male and a young boy. The adult male, *Ukla*, was the father of the young boy and husband of the younger woman. The older woman was his mother-in-law. These people appeared very friendly. We gave them presents we had brought and took photographs and made drawings of their hut. In addition, full anthropometric measurements were taken by me and blood was taken from fingers for typing by Mr Sarkar. Ukla was able to speak a few Hindi words and we gathered that he had been to Port Blair and knew Mr Bonington, formerly of the Forest Department, Andaman Islands. We found in front of the hut, hanging from a large tree the skull and mandible of a Dugong (*see* Plate I, Figs. 3 & 4). We enquired about its significance from Ukla, but unfortunately his knowledge of Hindi was not sufficient to explain it to us. We learned from him, however, that the name of the village was *Laito*. After making friendly gestures, we returned to 'Molly' and proceeded immediately towards Hut Bay. At about noon time while we were having our lunch, we suddenly saw three outrigger canoes (of single outrigger type) coming towards us, each carrying about 4 Onges. We signalled to them and they came to our launch and tied their canoes with it and came on board. The men appeared to be friendly and not afraid of us. Our greatest difficulty, however, was language, as we could not make ourselves understood as none of the crew or any other member including Mr Subramaniam of the Forest Department knew that language. There was one man who seemed to occupy a position of authority among these men, and was painted with red and yellow ochre on the forehead, arms and breast. The

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 * AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

now follow them, often ignoring their original significance and symbolism. Among the Onge, spirits are feared but not loved; the same applies to God Himself. 775

The Onge bury their dead in trenches, no deeper than three feet. Earth is tightly packed over the graves in order to prevent exhalations. Full details on the subject of Onge burial customs appear in the book that I am writing about the Onge. I slept with the Onge in communal huts that contained fresh graves, without suffering any inconvenience from the smell of the corpses. This recalls the palaeolithic sepulchral caves, where man probably lived as the Onge live in their sepulchral huts today. 764

There are no latrines near Onge camps – whether permanent or temporary. Excrements are spread carelessly all around, lightly covered with leaves and earth. Flies lay eggs on them. The Onge's only precaution is not to defecate where drinking water might be found after rainfall. With so many opportunities for reproduction, in some places flies form such clouds as to impress the natives themselves. In the north of Little Andaman a creek was named after the flies: Bumila Creek, which means "fly creek". Smells also occasionally inspire geographical names: Tambe-é-bùie, on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, means "the smelly place" in the Onge language. Flies, fleas and ticks are tolerated by the Onge who do not fight them. Fortunately, the hymenoptera collect flies for their nests, not, however, in quantities large enough to compete with the fertility of the species. 514 [512] 736 825 [703]

2. Clothing and personal care

The only garment worn by Little Andaman women is the *naquinēghĕ*, a scanty grasslike apron covering the genitals. In addition, during menstrual periods, Onge women wear the *bataghĕ*, for hygienic purposes. This is a simple cluster of long, soft green leaves cut by the husband for his wife from special trees: Myristica longifolia and others. The only leaves used are those from the end of a stalk, a section of which is left attached to the leaves. The stalk is slipped under the *naquinēghĕ*, while the long leaves are passed between the thighs to be fastened at the back above the buttocks. It is curious to see Onge women in such myristical attire! The *bataghĕ* is ethnographical news, new not only as regards the Andamans: it is an interesting indication of the hygienic measures employed by primitive people, and can probably be traced to prehistoric practices in analogous circumstances. The continental and insular regions nearest to the Andamans have retained no similar custom; their only practice is the strict isolation of menstruating women. Among the Onge, on the other hand, they are allowed free circulation. Washing is unknown to the Onge: they never wash their bodies intentionally. Brushing through the thick forest and diving into the sea or the river to collect food substitute adequately for washing. The Little Andaman forest is nearly always dripping; moving among the trees, specially in the early morning, is equivalent to bathing. The contact of wet leaves when walking cleans the Onge's skin, for they go naked; and as they constantly dive into the sea and rivers, they do not smell. Actually they give an impression of cleanliness – as opposed to many other dark-skinned 291 841 [824] [171] 515 [147]

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

3. Food

In the absence of men, women also are good at fishing inside the coral reefs. They do this with two small nets used together. Their catch generally consists of brilliantly coloured fish with yellow, red, green, blue, black and white stripes forming varied and attractive designs. The Onge eat all fish without discrimination. My Indian collaborators, on the other hand, considered the coloured fish dangerous to their health and refused to cook them ; the Sacred Vedas, in fact, advise the avoidance of brigthly hued fish and of fish without scales. I wanted to try both kinds, and found them perfectly palatable, tasty and harmless.

No tool, used for any purpose by the Onge, ever gets a cleaning. Cleanliness, I repeat, is unknown in Little Andaman. See how food is prepared and disposed of ! Care is taken only not to throw big pieces of meat intended for cooking directly on the bare ground ; but once it is cooked, food is treated with the utmost disregard for dirt, dust, cobwebs and other such things. It is usually left lying around on large leaves spread out for the purpose. The remains of the Onge's orgiastic meals are kept out of reach of the dogs on the ceiling of the huts, to be covered with flies when no fire is lit directly below. Sand and grit may get wedged annoyingly in the teeth, but not such impalpable things as dust or cobwebs. The use of unclean food is not repugnant to the Onge. The same can be said for water polluted by dogs drinking and bathing in it, or by the presence of putrefying carcases. In the west of Little Andaman I saw some Onge avidly drinking from pools of a blackish water with a revolting sulphurous smell. After thoroughly filtering and boiling it, I too used such water, for it was the only water available in the neighborhood. This caused no ill effects. My Indian men considered it perfectly healthy and invigorating, and drank it safely in its natural condition.

The Onge eat with their unwashed fingers, without the help of tools. On rare occasions they use platters made of the flattened-out stems – or bracts – of *areca* palms. They sometimes carry these platters when travelling, but of course never wash them although they become coated in rancid, greasy filth. They soon assume a dark colour and a truly revolting appearance – aside from the awful smell. A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN's statement – that the Andamanese paint their bodies to neutralize the unpleasant smell of food that clings to them after their orgiastic feedings – shows only indirect knowledge of the life and manners of those people. Even the horrible flatulence that follows their pork orgies is not considered an inconvenience ; yet it is much more revolting than all the other body odours.

Although the Onge observe few hygienic precautions they do follow a number of medical practices, not all devoid of beneficial effects. Here are a few more remarks on their eating and drinking habits. For about six months of the year, between November and April, water is scarce in Little Andaman. Every kind of fresh water is then considered good by the Onge, regardless of whether it is a murky infusion of rotting leaves or afloat with the putrefied

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

312 caracases of small animals. During the droughts, marine hermit crabs, of
271 which a profusion is found in Little Andaman even far from the sea-shore,
[136] often choose to die in fresh-water pools. They are not removed from the pools.
[415] A nautilus shell is sometimes used as a drinking vessel ; failing this, the Onge
[516] lap up the water like animals, on all fours, directly from the pool. Since they are
231 very fond of dogs, man and dog drink together from the same tiny pool, often holding no more than a few pints of water. Dogs reached Great Andaman as early as 1857 ; they came to Little Andaman much later. Before that time there were no dogs in the Andamanese Archipelago. They soon became the natives' cherished and much appreciated assistants in the hunting of wild pigs. Many unhygienic habits followed the appearance of dogs in the Andamans.

271 The Onge have no idea of boiling water for the purpose of disinfection ;
[147] nevertheless their health does not appear to suffer at all as a result of the pol-
123 luted water they drink. When, in 1952, I dug a well near the left bank of Dugong Creek on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, I was compelled to fence it in so as to prevent dogs from drinking it and bathing in it.

264 Dogs lick everything that smells of food, including the cooking pots,
[231] and the pots are not washed before use after the dogs have licked them.
[136] Swarms of flies of different species and small coleoptera of a brilliant blue colour, one of them 6 mms long, follow the dogs after they have "cleaned" the pots by licking them. They line the inside of the pots with a crawling, living coat, moving restlessly around in search of food. One species of fly, which is of a brilliant, metallic green colour, has a peculiarly disagreeable smell. All the flies lay eggs while feeding, but the eggs are soon devoured by the hovering bluish coleoptera. Thus in a few hours all traces of organic matter disappear from the pots. Subsequent exposure to fire undoubtedly destroys the germs that would otherwise be certainly dangerous to human beings.

415 The Onge no longer use indigenous pottery for cooking. Its disappearance
177 is recent, as the sherds that litter Little Andaman prove to the investigator.
[323] Excavation in modern kitchen-middens leads to the same conclusion. During the last war, quantities of empty petrol drums were washed up on the Andaman shores. They were found in such numbers that the Onge have not yet used them all up : after 1952 I found several of these containers abandoned, untouched, in the jungle. The primitive inhabitants sawed each container in two cylindrical halves, thus transforming them into cooking pots. The result was that within a few years the fragile ancestral pottery of the Onge disappeared altogether. Furthermore, aluminium pots were distributed among the natives after 1952. Probably the indigenous pottery will never again reappear.
[252] Each half of a petrol drum is large enough to contain a pig, or a turtle weighing
262 150 lbs, cut into pieces. Only the flesh of these animals is consumed by the
[231] Onge ; the nourishing broth is poured out onto the ground or left in the pot to be lapped up by the dogs. The Onge believe that broth is unhealthy and avoid drinking it.

251 No matter how prodigious the catch of sardines or other fish, unobtain-
[185] able at other times of the year, no attempt is made at storing part of it in view of future shortage. The Onge are unacquainted with methods for preserv-

9:Sarkar D-5 (1948) 1962 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Jarawa

painted with red ochre. It was perhaps left there for drying. The Jarawa would surely have returned just for this bow!

It was a straight piece of wood tapering at both ends. The outer surface was convex and was painted red, while the inner one was straight and smooth, and showed criss-cross designs and indentations. We then went to look for a spring and found it at some distance behind a steep rock but there was no water then. It appeared that the Jarawa had left this camp some time ago.

We then left Spike Island and sailed for Yeratia Jig. Here an old kitchen midden was known to be another Jarawa haunt. No Jarawa was found even there, however. The kitchen midden was a mound strewn all over with animal bones. Fragments of typical Andamanese pottery and a blue stone bead were discovered there.

In recent years the Jarawa raids have been rather more frequent. GUPTA (1955) has given a list of them in his report on these people. It is believed that the primary cause of the restlessness of the Jarawa is the shortage of game and other food material [3]. On the other hand the tribe appears to have been sufficiently provoked by the punitive expeditions. All the Jarawa villages that the punitive party came upon were burnt down. In the encounter of March 1911 a woman was captured alive and nobody knows what happened to her afterwards. The pregnant woman captured along with four children in 1938 off Bluff Island later on gave birth to a boy (SARKAR, 1952, Pl. IX, fig. 3) at Port Blair but it was difficult to tame her. After her delivery she attempted to swim away and was rescued from the sea. She would spend hours climbing a cocoanut tree. Her whereabouts were unknown during the Japanese occupation of the Andaman Islands during the last war. The young children were sent to the Mission at Car Nicobar, where the present writer studied them in 1948. One of them had died before.

On the other hand the Jarawa raids, according to the then executive Government officers, are also very brutal. Before they go out for a raid the Jarawa cover their chests with bark armour and paint their faces with patterns of white clay. The bark armour is stitched securely on the body by other persons and can only be removed by cutting off the stitches. These people are in the habit of mutilating their victims. They take out their brains, their eyes, and their bodies are hacked all over. – The type of arrow they use is almost a spear; as may be seen from fig. 4. This arrow was obtained by the present writer from the forest department officers of Long Island in 1951. It was used injuring a bush police officer of the night picket unit at Lakera Lunta in January of that year. The police, in return, shot one Jarawa dead. The male nurse of the Long Island Hospital took the following body measurements of this dead man :

Height ... 5 feet 1 inch
Chest ... 36 inches

Fig. 4

[3] They have of late been reported from about the region of Homlungta, Rangat Bay, etc. on the east coast of Middle Andaman. (The spelling "Ronga Bay" on the map is incorrect.)

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

137 chance landing of a tiny seed means inevitable death by strangulation and the new plant ends by covering its victim with its own leaves, rising above the wreck till it looks like an independent tree.

In another form this struggle between plant and plant goes on all over the Andamans. In many places, especially where the ground is flat, the foliage overhead kills the undergrowth by cutting off the light. The tops of the trees, thickened by the festoons of climbers growing over them, form a blanket high above the ground, keeping out the light in their own struggle to reach the sun. In the darkness below the vegetation is sparse and thin, and I took advantage of the fact many times on journeys on Little Andaman, and also on Bluff Island, Long Island and Great Andaman. On the steeper slopes, all thickly wooded, the sun penetrates more easily, however, and the undergrowth flourishes, particularly thorny plants, and the need to try and avoid being gashed always added considerably to the effort of struggling up the slopes.

There is one climber[1] which bears growths that have the appearance of halberds. I never succeeded in finding out the function or the purpose of these adornments. The plant is a liana of incredible length, which climbs from tree to tree right to the top, often over fifty metres up, to find the sun. Throughout its upward twists and turns the diameter of the stem remains the same, not more than five centimetres. From top to bottom it puts out shoots of varying lengths which hang straight down and it is on these that the halberds appear. Green at first, the growths dry almost to black. They are neither leaves nor spines and they have no apparent function but to grace the shoots that carry them. I measured some of the shoots which are very pliable; they taper a little, but are almost filiform, varying in size from half a metre to 1·2 metres long, with a diameter of three centimetres at the base. Around each of these shoots or spikes, the 'halberds' are arranged with absolute symmetry, in opposite pairs, each pair set at right angles to the previous pair. The 'wings' of the halberds are not more than three centimetres wide, and the overall length of each pair is about six centimetres.

824 ● 312 Among the lianas are some valued by the islanders because they provide a clear liquid which has a pleasant, rather bitter, vegetable

[1] The author gives no name for this climber, which has been tentatively identified from the description as the rattan, or climbing palm.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

taste. The liquid content of these stems is so great that it makes them extremely heavy to carry. These lianas are very common all over the islands and anyone who knows them need never die of thirst. To get at the liquid one only has to break the stem and put it to one's mouth; if one puts a receptacle under the break, a litre or so of liquid can be obtained in a matter of minutes. When the first strangers came to the archipelago, the Andamanese watched them tear down parts of the forest, including these lianas, and tried in vain to protest at the vandalism. No one understood their protests, but they were right.

The forest abounds in trees whose fruits in season form an important source of food for the islanders. One is the so-called jackfruit, *Artocarpus communis*, which here grows wild, though various species are cultivated all over Asia. The fruits, which appear on the thickest branches as well as on the trunk, are smaller in the wild variety, rarely weighing more than thirty grams, but the yield is enormous and the islanders enjoy them for months, especially from March to May. The Onges call them *bulumdanghe*, and roast them in hot ashes till the hard pulp and seeds are eatable; the latter, the size of a hazelnut but tougher, are the best part.

Another useful plant is the *Pandanus*, or screw-pine. On Little Andaman extensive areas are covered with nothing else, making progress very difficult owing to the twisting roots and the spines on the long, tough leaves. It seems to prefer the coastal areas, particularly the marshes, where it often grows into an impenetrable jungle. There are at least two species, one of which is gregarious. The other, which grows as isolated specimens, is longer leaved, with bigger fruits and stems like candelabra, standing up on an arch of roots, as though on stilts. With the leaves of this variety, fluted and easy to arrange like roof tiles, the Onges can quickly improvise a waterproof covering. The young leaves provide them with ornaments which they wear for their dances, while the pulp of the fruit, which looks rather like a pineapple, perfumed and delicately flavoured, is nutritious though somewhat stringy.

Along the coasts where there are no *Pandanus*, one very often sees something very different – mangroves. The islanders use the wood for their canoe floats, and for fixing pegs (see p. 122) and the supply is unlimited, as the growth and spread of the mangroves are assured by a number of factors which have made them one of the best

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

352 The beds are supported on four convenient branches forked at the top, on which the four poles forming the bed frame rest. The size of the frame varies between 1·55 × 0·65 metres and 1·15 × 0·43 metres, and on this small platform the entire family sleeps huddled
513 together. The human members of the family lie longwise, all with their heads on the same log set as a head-rest (unless they are lucky enough to find a suitable giant bamboo washed up on the beach). Very occasionally a rush mat about half a metre square is laid on the platform, but usually the family just lies on bare canes packed tightly together on the frame parallel with the long side.

342 The hut at Tambe-e-buiè, its 1951 edition delayed till 1952 by
358 the earthquake the previous year when part of the coast dropped,
184 was rather larger than Toqué-è-bùie. In 1953 it was rebuilt twenty
[731] metres or so further back from the sea, but exactly as before. It has twelve beds, including two on the high platforms for the adolescents, one of which has two tiers, on the principle of our bunks. I saw this type of thing on a number of occasions and on one occasion I saw one being built out in the open, with the top platform three metres from the ground. All the beds at Tambe-e-buiè are rather higher than at Toqué-è-bùie (but not as high as Beniaboi) and were all arranged radially; the platform on which meat was kept was two metres off the ground.

342 An unusual feature of Tambe-e-buiè, which had a diameter of
184 13·55 metres and a maximum height of 4·5 metres, was a series of six vertical poles set in a straight line to support the main transverse beam, one of which could be regarded as a centre pole. The pole on each side of the centre formed part of the innermost circle of supporting poles; there were two more circles, all supporting rings of canes. Unusually, only one of the rings of canes supporting the roof did not rest on vertical poles. The outer ring was only 0·4 metres high and the edge of the roof almost touched the ground, although one could still brush the fronds apart and crawl out. The roof mats were rectangular, very well made, and larger than at Toqué-è-bùie; some were three and a half metres by three metres or more, laid over seven or ten split reeds, instead of the usual four or five.

● 312 No permanent hut, or even a temporary shelter, is ever built far
[361] from water supplies adequate for the number of people in the group. If there is none visible, the Onges know how to dig for it,

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

providing not too much effort is required. The Semang and Aeta dig water-holes, and several authors have regarded the Andamanese as differing from them in this respect, but I am able to confirm that they can and do dig water-holes. I first saw them do so in 1951, and in 1952 and again in 1953, near Toqué-è-bùie, I was able to enlarge one. Originally it yielded very little water, and very dirty, as the Onges never bother to go further down than they must – a handful of water is enough. After I had enlarged the well it yielded over half a cubic metre an hour, and I had to build a fence round it to prevent the dogs wallowing in it. I gave the Onges buckets, rope, pick-axes and spades so they could get at clean water, although in view of their natural indolence I rather doubted whether they would be any use. In fact, they used the metal parts for arrow heads and went on as before, drinking out of foul pools covered in rotting vegetation and refuse. It is easy to have clear water on Little Andaman, naturally filtered over the coral formations and never more than two or three metres down, but the effort is too much for the Onges! Usually they drink like animals, lying flat on their stomachs with their lips to the water; some will fold a large leaf into a crude cup, however, and occasionally a fastidious individual will use a *Nautilus* shell.

The water-hole at Toqué-è-bùie alone, if properly maintained, would be able to supply enough water every day for at least five hundred people. The continual falling in of the sides, inevitable in a sandy area, could be permanently prevented by cementing them.